



**Above, several types of exploded ordnance are displayed. Finding and clearing exploded and unexploded ordnance on the Nellis range are the most labor-intensive jobs EOD does each week. Below, Tech. Sgt. John Holland shows off the M-82 Barrett sniper rifle. This weapon is used to "reach out and touch" the unexploded munitions. This is the least hazardous method of destroying munitions.**

**Below, Senior Airman Scott Eastes identifies an unexploded munition. Once it is positively identified, it will be destroyed.**



**Above, two members of the EOD team take cover as a Mark 82 500-pound bomb is destroyed. Using explosives such as C-4 and DETCORD, munitions are rendered harmless. (Photos by Tech. Sgt. Eddy Dominguez)**

# EOD is more than a bomb squad...a lot more

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AWFC Public Affairs**

When most people think of Air Force explosive ordnance disposal, one thing that comes to mind is bomb detection.

While that is an important function of the Nellis EOD team, Maj. Jim McReynolds, 99th Civil Engineer Squadron EOD commander, said, "EOD is more than just a bomb squad."

Tech. Sgt. Ed Dominguez, NCOIC of Quality Assurance for Nellis' EOD flight, explains.

"We are required to support our flightline and base operations, meaning if an aircraft has an ordnance-related problem which can't be solved, we will be called to respond. On the operations side of the house, if there is a package which is suspected to be hazardous we will be tasked to respond," he said. "What takes up a large amount of our time here at Nellis is the millions of acres of bombing range that we are required to make safe so that contractor personnel may safely enter the target areas to refurbish the targets."

The Nellis EOD team actually has a variety of responsibilities, including world-

wide combat support and force protection, Nellis on-base emergency response, off-base emergency response, the Nevada Test and Training Range, the Nevada Test Site, support for the U.S. Secret Service and specialized training.

"Our number-one job is to be ready to go to war or be ready to deploy in support of a contingency," said Maj. McReynolds. "Our flight has taskings under nine out of 10 AEFs. We provide lead, follow and base support equipment sets."

Sgt. Dominguez agrees that worldwide combat support is EOD's most important mission.

"We have a lot of functions which are all equally important, but we are here for war time," Sgt. Dominguez said. "The most rewarding time for me was when I was tasked to clear land mines in Bosnia for the Army so that they could set up tents in dry areas for their soldiers."

Another primary mission of EOD is serving as Nellis' first response team for emergencies involving explosives.

"We are the direct support unit for the largest above-ground weapons storage facility in the nation. We provide emergency response for all assigned aircraft and munitions, as well as aircraft participat-

ing in flag exercises," said Maj. McReynolds. "We also provide force protection for Nellis against a terrorist's improvised devices, from a simple pipe bomb to a Khobar Towers-type device."

One of the more visible areas of responsibility for EOD is the off-base emergency response. When an emergency situation arises off base that local agencies aren't equipped to handle, they call the Nellis EOD team.

"We maintain a very strong working relationship with the Las Vegas Fire Department's bomb squad, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms," Maj. McReynolds said. "We have a lot of capabilities that the off-base community doesn't have."

These include robotics: large robots (All-purpose Remote Transport System) to counter large-volume or vehicle-improvised explosive devices, and small robots to counter smaller improvised explosive devices that may be time or remotely initiated. In addition, Nellis' EOD unit also has personnel protective equipment, detection, packaging, and capabilities to deal with a full spectrum of weapons of

mass destruction threats.

"We have the ability to address any military ordnance hazards, and the manpower to deal with large-scale incidents," Maj. McReynolds said.

When needed, the EOD team also provides Secret Service support.

"Our work with the secret service is the only mission where EOD does search," Maj. McReynolds said. "In that mission, we protect the president, vice president, presidential candidates and other dignitaries."

One of the most time-consuming missions performed by the Nellis EOD team is supporting the Nevada Test and Training Range.

"This is most hazardous thing we do," the major said. "We do active range clearance of 3.5 million acres, and clear three cluster bomb unit grids. It takes up most of our time, and a majority of our manpower."

In order to maintain proficiency in all their taskings, EOD members don't just train hard, they train smart.

"I would not be setting my people up for success if I didn't train them," Maj. McReynolds said.

That training includes physical conditioning every morning at the Area Two gym, training on terrorist devices and weapons of mass destruction and a joint exercise with regional federal, state, local and DoD agencies called LOADED DICE.

"Our vision is to field the best quality trained, finest equipped and most confident EOD team in the Air Force," said Maj. McReynolds. "To do that, we make training our number-one priority."

Such intense training has paid off in the past, earning the Nellis EOD flight the Senior Master Sgt. Gerald J. Stryzak Award for "Best EOD Flight in the Air Force" in 1996, and again in 1999.

"We are the only two-time winner of this award," Maj. McReynolds said. "By far, this is the best place in the Air Force to



**Left, Staff Sgt. Amanda Homer places a device for the robot to remove during an exercise. In many situations, the robot is the best way to remove explosives and avoid endangering human life.**

**Right, a member of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms attends a training session with members of the EOD squad. Joint operations and training like this ensure a smooth working relationship and thorough exchange of information in the event of an actual incident.**



**Staff. Sgt. Michael Bibb, 99th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight, puts on an explosive protective suit with the help of Airman 1st Class J. Brodeaur. The suit will greatly increase his chance of survival if something goes wrong while disarming or moving a suspected explosive.**